

## Campaign has been quiet for Giglio, Scott in 148th Assembly District



**From Right, W. Ross Scott and Joseph Giglio**

**By RICK MILLER**

It has been a quiet campaign in the 148th Assembly District. Thank — or blame — COVID-19.

Assemblyman Joseph Giglio, R-Gowanda, said he hasn't attended the usual campaign events and dinners. There just haven't been that many.

Democrat W. Ross Scott, an Allegany County environmental attorney from Independence, has also waged a low-key campaign in challenging for Giglio's Assembly seat, largely out of concern for the coronavirus.

Since things have been quiet, instead of campaigning, Giglio said he has more time to address constituent concerns. He's still working on policy with Assembly colleagues and stopping at different places across the three-county district to see how things are going.

On Wednesday he visited the Pioneer Oil Museum in Bolivar.

The 148th Assembly District includes all of Cattaraugus and Allegany counties, and part of Steuben County.

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“One thing I’m working on is broadband,” Giglio said. “This is important to people and for preparing for the future.”

The Assemblyman said it’s been a strange year.

“There hasn’t been much opportunity for the regular type of campaigning,” he said. “It’s time to stay busy with so many things going on around us.”

Giglio said he hadn’t met Scott on the campaign trail, but they had spoken by telephone.

A scheduled debate at St. Bonaventure University fell through because Scott had concerns about COVID-19 and, in his 70s, he is in a high-risk category. For technical reasons, it could not be done via Zoom video conference.

Giglio said he misses not being able to do the same campaigning he’s used since 2005, when he won a special election for the Assembly seat vacated by Catharine Young when she filled the region’s state Senate seat.

“I do have a body of work,” he said. “I have worked hard for my district.” He’s ranking member of the Corrections Committee and sits on the Aging, Children and Families, Ethics and Guidance and Codes committees. “We have a record and we’re proud of it.”

Getting out the vote takes a whole new meaning with early voting and expanded absentee voting in the coronavirus pandemic, Giglio said. “You are not just gearing up for Election Day — it’s like Election Month.”

Getting your message out isn’t easy, Giglio admitted. “It’s dwarfed by the presidential campaign, but I’m out there trying to work hard and will continue to work hard.”

He said he missed the “shoe leather” events and meeting people. “We’ve done some mail and some signs. I spoke at the Republican reorganization meeting asking for volunteers. We still need to get out the vote.”

Scott was nominated for the Democratic line after Great Valley Supervisor Dan Brown declined the nomination. Brown had previously challenged Giglio.

The number one issue is COVID-19, Scott said.

“What else should the state be doing?” he asked. “A lot of rural people in Cattaraugus and Allegany counties think it’s a hoax. It’s going to make it hard to bring an end to the coronavirus. Until people take it seriously, the governor needs to get control of the situation and get local officials to enforce it.”

Also, Scott said local municipal and health officials should provide more transparency on where new COVID-19 cases are recorded.

Scott wonders how the state is going to deal with upcoming business bankruptcies and foreclosures stemming from COVID-19. He thinks Gov. Andrew Cuomo should call the congressional delegation together to press for federal COVID aid to state and local governments, businesses and individuals.

Scott said he differs from Giglio on several issues, including New York's so-called SAFE Act, a package of gun-control measures passed in late 2013; bail reform; and driver's licenses for undocumented migrants.

"As a defense lawyer, there are good arguments for why we need bail reform," he said.

Among the first area environmental issues he worked on in the region was the **West Valley Demonstration Project Act** for former U.S. Rep. Stan Lundine, and "Bump the Dump," the grassroots opposition to the state's plan to site a low-level radioactive waste dump in Allegany County.

He's continued that work more recently, opposing right-of-way for the Northern Access natural gas pipeline that, if completed, would carry fracked natural gas from Pennsylvania through a corner of Allegany County and up through Cattaraugus County for eventual delivery to Canadian markets.

Scott said that, if elected, unlike Giglio, he'd be a member of the majority in the Assembly. "They'll have to listen to me," he said.

Scott said Giglio's solution to the SAFE Act, "drawing a line around suburban New York counties and saying the SAFE Act doesn't apply west of that line, is a non-solution."

Among other measures, the SAFE Act made it illegal to sell or buy certain military-style semiautomatic rifles in New York state, while also banning high-capacity magazines.